DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 336 197 PS 019 801

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TITLE Are Your Children Captured by Ninja Turtles? How To Turn What Children "Love" into What Is Appropriate.
INSTITUTION Waubonsee Community Coll., Sugar Grove, Ill.
PUB DATE 23 Feb 91
NOTE 47p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Chicago Association for the Education of Young Children (Chicago, IL, February 21-23, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052))

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Guidance; *Language Enrichment; Learning Activities; Material Development; *Popular Culture; Preschool Children; Preschool Education; *Prosocial Behavior; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Media Imagery; *Ninja Turtles

ABSTRACT

This booklet relates ways to communicate with preschoolers about such phenomena as Ninja Turtles. Ninja Turtles are likeable, fun-loving creatures that have captured the imagination of children because they have a great deal of energy, strength, and power. However, because the turtles model language and engage in violence that negatively affects children, teachers need to find ways to redirect children's attention. The reader of this booklet will gain an understanding of: (1) the history of Ninja Turtles; (2) Ninja Turtle characters and their particular strengths (to help facilitate communication with children); (3) problems connected with the turtles that relate to preschoolers; (4) ways to help children move beyond Ninja Turtle activities; (5) examples of activities that substitute for Ninja Turtle activities; and (6) ways to speak to children about Ninja Turtles. Interesting elements of activities extracted from turtle media can be used to get children away from what is negative fantasy or pretend play to what is positive fantasy or real play. Children can be helped to focus on activities that are socially and educationally productive as opposed to activities that are damaging to their development. Appendices provide fact sheets about the Ninja Turtles, a form for children's letters to their parents, and information about activities, interest centers, and recipes. (RH)

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Are Your Children Captured by Ninja Turtles?

How to Turn What Children "Love" into What is Appropriate.

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Booklet written by Sue Miles

Waubonsee Community College

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February 23, 1991

Chicago Hilton Towers

This workshop is presented by

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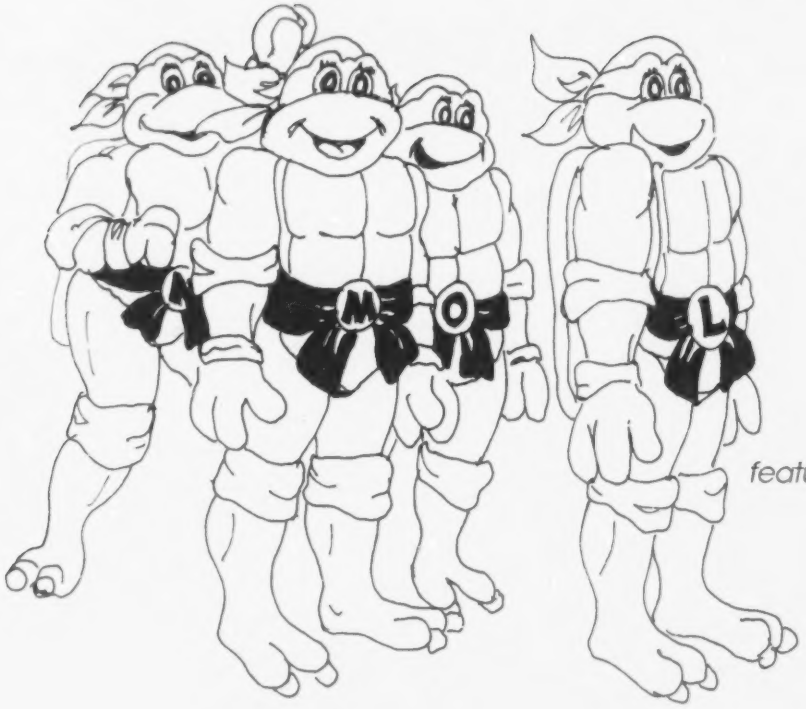

featuring turtles
Melissa Hanson
Shelly Powell
Luci Aviles
Karen Forrer

This booklet will explain ways to communicate with children about such phenomena as Ninja Turtles. The same techniques may be used to help teachers or parents deal with any fad or idea that appears to consume children. Participants will learn how to move children to related but completely separate play (curriculum) activities.

Introduction

This booklet is centered around changing activities from those which are inappropriate to those that are appropriate--specifically Ninja Turtle activities. Ninja Turtles are literally everywhere. Not only are the toy stores full of the small dolls and accessories, but the turtles can be found on items ranging from pencils to lunch boxes, bubble bath containers, and sleeping bags as well as wallpaper.

After researching the idea behind the turtles and watching them in action, it is easy to see why they are America's hottest phenomenon and why children are captured. In the Unauthorized Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Quiz Book by Jeff Rovin, the following reasons are listed as to why these characters have caught children's imagination:

(1) The turtles are likable and we can relate to them--their yearning for junk food, their fun-loving nature, even their bickering;
(2) The turtles are simple, everyday folk, just like us. The only difference is that they happen to be two-legged, talking, martial arts-practicing turtles;
(3) The turtles (supposedly) care about each other and about every living thing; and
(4) The turtles are brave with heroic qualities we admire and hope to have somewhere inside of us.

(1990:viii)

If Ninja turtles are so great then why does the phenomenon need to be examined in relation to preschool children? There are several reasons for the need for analysis. First, when children are so overtaken by a single concept or an idea that the children's developing minds are focused too firmly upon that subject, the concept or idea can cause children to miss important learnings that are more appropriate and that provide a healthier emotional, physical, social and intellectual base for the children's development. Secondly, the turtles fight and use violence that children model and later demonstrate. Thirdly, turtles are causing young children to become even more consumer oriented than ever at a young age. As one four year old expressed: "Buy me more, more, more of the same old turtles--they keep breaking and I want more." Finally, Ninja turtles (even though they claim to be useful beings), demonstrate a way of being and language that teachers are trying to keep children from using. Such words as "mugged," weapons," "kidnapped," "fight," "battle," "brawl," "snatchers," "killer," "cowabunga," "shredder," "invasion," and others are used as Ninja Turtles communicate. (It is true that words such as strength, knowledge, and peace are also used but since children naturally want to "feel big, proud and important" [Hymes: 1981]; they seem to focus on the previous negative words that imply greater power.)

There are other important elements that will also be covered in the booklet. An overall summary of objectives follows. The reader will gain an understanding of the: (1) history of Ninja Turtles; (2) identification of turtles and their strengths (to help teachers communicate better with

children); (3) problems connected with the turtles as the problems relate to preschool children; (4) ways to help children move beyond Ninja turtle activities; (5) specific examples of activities to substitute for Ninja Turtle activities; and (6) specific ways to speak to children about Ninja Turtles. It is also hoped that the booklet will be entertaining and challenging as teachers work to improve personal classroom environments.

Sue Miles
January, 1991

Table of Contents

Introduction ii

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Rage 1

The Turtle's Origins 1

Children and the Turtles 2

Characteristics of Children 3

Children as Consumers 5

What Is Wanted For Children 5

Establishing Rapport 5

Identifying and Substituting Appropriate Activities and Experiences 6

Guidance Techniques to Use 10

Indirect 10

Direct 13

Statements 13

Summary 15

Bibliography 17

About the Speaker 19

Appendix A -- Fact Sheets 21-25

Appendix B -- Child's Letter to Parents 27

Appendix C -- Ideas, Activities, Interest Centers, Recipes 29-40

Activities 31

Interest Centers 33

Recipes 37

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Rage

A five year old recently made the statement, "I like Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and skinny blondes who don't smoke." This is a long cry from "warm woolen mittens" and "brown paper packages wrapped up in string" as Julie Andrews sings about in the song "Favorite Things," or Humpty Dumpty, the old egg who fell off the wall. The most interesting thing about this statement is that it is indeed typical of the way large numbers of children think in today's world. The true questions (in relation to such topics as Ninja Turtles and skinny blondes) are: (1) "Why do children feel this way?", (2) "How did this thinking begin?" and (3) "What, if any, are the consequences of such thinking?".

The Turtle's Origin

According to Jeff Rovin (1990:ix), the "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" are not a "mere fad" but "original, vital, exciting characters" who have "the ability to change with the times." Rovin goes on to point out that the turtles have broken all records "in the areas of toy sales, comic book sales, movie ticket sales, videocassette sales, and record album sales." They have multiple origins. Hiller (1990:27) tells about at least one origin described by Splinter, a normal rat who left Japan to reside in America, who is a character in the turtle stories.

> One day I saw an old blind man crossing the street, unaware of the truck barreling down upon him. The truck swerved to avoid him. The truck was loaded with metal canisters of weird chemicals. One of them bounced off the truck. There was a little boy on the sidewalk holding a glass jar. In the jar were four baby turtles. . . The canister smashed into the jar and then crashed into the street. Soon the turtles were covered with a glowing ooze flowing out of the canister. The little boy's mother wouldn't let him touch them.*

The story continues with Splinter (the rat) discussing how he put the turtles in an old coffee can and brought them to his home in the sewer. Upon awakening the next morning Splinter found the can tipped over for the turtles had "doubled in size."

This origin of turtles is fascinating. The turtles (like children are) were once small and suddenly the turtles (like children want to have happen) became large. Is there any wonder the children are fascinated? The turtles also have specific personalities and traits that are enthralling (See Appendix A).

Children and the Turtles

Children are intrinsically motivated to make an effect on their environment. Not only do they have trouble sitting still, they approach almost every situation through motor activity and sensory exploration. The turtles do the same thing. The turtle's activities and the described activities of their enemies include words of action such as kick, drag,

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*Notice the underlined "words of power" that children would absolutely find fascinating.

scurry, spin, tap, swipe, swing, attack, throw, claw, bite, leap, run, fall, push, trip, dash, smell, punch, stagger, chop, stumble, slam, hit, pull, whack, crash, kiss, ride, show-off, scoot, knock, stick, fight, move, squeeze, chase, shred, knock, rub, point, slap, climb, draw blood, disarm, rage, throw, die, overpower, stab, battle, wrap, whip, yank, clamp and others. When the energy level of children is combined with words in turtle activities such as these, children begin to perceive that they (who like the turtles are really small somewhat helpless creatures in the environment) can gain recognition and power by putting energy words in action. These activities used in the wrong context and equated with violence, cause children to concentrate on engaging in negative personal actions and interactions with others. The actions then cause children to receive negative messages from and engage in negative interactions with adults as well as waste precious time that children could be using to focus on what is developmentally appropriate. The children truly begin to feel big, powerful and important as they hit, chop and swing at others or dramatize such actions.

Children naturally become frustrated over day to day occurrences as they try to make sense of their world. Instead of learning to use positive words to solve problems, they jump from the natural negative occurrence into their ever ready world of fantasy and actually personify the turtles. Finally because children like to experiment with unusual words or ideas, the turtles provide an extremely negative example since many of the words they use have shock value and/or serve as labels for name-calling. (Children have already constantly heard labels used to describe others as well as themselves. Children sometimes have heard words used against them such as "silly" or "dumb" [as when they are told by adults not to be "silly" or "dumb"], "rug rats," "brats," "monsters," "babies," and other chastising words that not only humiliate them but build resentment.) When small but powerful creatures like the turtles use such words the children begin to feel that they can lash out at, not only other children, but in the words of the now famous Bart Simpson (People Magazine:1991), "the entire world of grownups who are corrupt and stupid." Shock words from the turtles include (but are not limited to):

atomic mouth	dome head
barfoni	elf lips
hose brain	gack face
yuk	awesome
kill	die
baddest	meannest
cool	stupid
tough	razor-sharp
lock	freak
triumph	fate
camel breath	

It is becoming easier to see why turtles "capture" young children.

Characteristics of Children

Young children are different from mature adults. Children under six have characteristics that set them apart and make them act in certain ways. The following is a list of some the characteristics. Young children:

(1) act more from a physical and emotional base than an intellectual base;
(2) are extremely active and have a great deal of energy;
(3) slip easily from reality into fantasy or play-acting;
(4) live in the here and now most of the time;
(5) try to demonstrate that they are big, powerful and important;
(6) are fascinated by what is new and different or unusual;
(7) are creative by nature;
(8) are sometimes easily frustrated and are often unable or unwilling to verbally discuss highly emotional topics;
(9) are curious;
(10) are developing vocabulary often through imitation;

The chart on page 4 shows how children's characteristics fuse with Ninja turtle activities and create problems for children.

Children's Characteristics	How Turtle Characteristics Create Problems for Children
Children:	Problems:
1. act more from a physical and emotional base than an intellectual base.	1. Since Ninja Turtles are portrayed as small physical beings (fighting, punching, getting even, whining, etc.) young children believe this is the way to act and react. Young children cannot use their intellect enough to reason that there should be a time and place for such play-acting (if in fact it should ever occur). Negative habits in children begin to develop.
2. are extremely active and have a great deal of energy.	2. Ninja Turtles provide children with an excuse for pseudosophistication and negative "attention getting" as they emulate the turtles.
3. slip easily from reality into fantasy or play acting.	3. Ninja Turtles provide children an excuse for not tackling tasks for which they are mentally ready; it is just easier to slip into chasing, running hitting, etc. (also see #5 in list of problems).
4. live in the here and now most of the time.	4. Without other challenging activities in their environment, children spend too much of the here and now in Ninja Turtle play at the expense of activities that would be beneficial.
5. try to demonstrate that they are big, powerful, and important.	5. Lilian Katz (1991:113) states: "The Position Statement on media violence in children's lives, recently adopted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, points out that young children are particularly vulnerable (to violence) because they're not yet fully able to distinguish fantasy from reality, and their grasp of the underlying motives for behavior and the subtleties of moral conflicts is not yet well developed." Instead of children slowly understanding the real meaning of being big, powerful, and important--the children model violence.
6. are fascinated by what is new and different or unusual.	6. Ninja Turtles are certainly unusual with their suddenly increased size, weapons and power.
7. are creative by nature.	7. Ninja Turtles turn children into greater consumers. Many of the plastic dolls and systems break easily. Children should be using toys or real objects that help them use personal creativity.
8. are curious.	8. Ninja Turtles distract children and take time away from children's use of natural curiosity.
9. are developing new vocabulary, often through imitation.	9. Ninja Turtles use inappropriate slang language as described on page 7.

Children as Consumers

As David Elkind points out in his book The Hurried Child, "children have little money to spend for a very restricted range of goods." (1980) Elkind elaborates:

> Children do not buy cars, furniture, medications, and so on; but they are the consumers of toys, breakfast cereal, and fast foods. . . . Since children watch over five hours of advertising a week, they see approximately twenty thousand commercials a year. Advertisers spend over $600 million a year selling to children and the child becomes the advertiser's representative in the home. (p. 78)

Television is creating what might be called "pseudosophistication" (Elkind; 1981:77)--knowledge about drugs, violence, crime, divorce and so on due to long hours of television viewing. When children see cute, appealing and powerful objects (Ninja turtles) and realize that they can have these objects, consumerism literally explodes. Not only do children press parents to buy such objects but as Elkind suggests, children identify with and seek to emulate the characters they have demanded and continually demand to own.

What Is Wanted for Children?

What do people want for their children? When asking parents, the following answers are often given:

(1) children should be honest, responsible, caring and moral individuals;
(2) children need to be self-directed, self-thinking individuals who can make positive decisions for themselves and others;
(3) children should be creative and knowledgeable;
(4) children should be resourceful problem-solving individuals;
(5) children should value education and aesthetics;
(6) children should be able to critically analyze situations;
(7) children should be spiritually oriented, relaxed individuals who are at peace with themselves;
(8) children should be happy.

If parents truly want these qualities, traits, and characteristics, how do they and how do teachers help children to obtain these attributes? Hildebrand (1980) reports that significant adults in the lives of children effect them positively when those adults use techniques such as, leading and redirecting behavior. When children identify with and see turtles as their leaders, they perceive traits that do not bring about the previously stated desired goals. As has been stated, turtles are armed, they grumble, fight and engage in violent activities.

Establishing Rapport

In order to help children make changes in undesirable actions or attitudes a single most important transaction between teachers and children must occur as well as become an action of general practice. That transaction is the development of rapport. Rapport is the development of a sympathetic connection or harmony between two people, meaning that the two individuals are more alike than they are different. If teachers appear to be "against" an

idea or concept that children "love" then it is extremely difficult for children to respect these teachers who are trying to change their behavior.

If children are openly discussing a phenomenon such as Ninja turtles, teachers need to show that they know something about that which teachers oppose. For example if Sharon is running about the playground practicing a form of martial arts and stating that she is Donatello's assistant, the teacher might say "I can see you are practicing 'Kung Fu' (See Appendix A, Fact Sheet 4); however, 'Kung Fu' cannot be practiced at this time. Let's use your strength to cross the jungle bars." The teacher has now demonstrated rapport (acceptance of the child's idea and helped her redirect the idea of strength to a productive activity). The child respects the teacher because she did not immediately reject her and this respect carries over to other situations.

Carl Rogers once stated in his book A Way of Being, that good teaching really has little to do with certificates or degrees but more to do with a person's "way of being." As teachers strive to do a better job, knowledge of subject matter can help them find words that when used will lead to greater development of rapport. Researching or reading about what children like helps teachers stay abreast of information needed to meet the challenges of dealing with them. Tony Robbins (1986:208) says rapport is "the magic bond that unites people and makes them feel like partners." Robbins also states that "When we say people are 'having differences,' we mean that the ways in which they are not alike are causing all sorts of problems." Rapport between teachers and children is required to set the stage for discipline or guidance techniques that lead to self-discipline on the part of the child (Miles, undated manuscript:13). This rapport is needed as we use known guidance techniques such as substituting appropriate activities, redirection of children's action, verbal statements and other defined techniques. Rapport cannot develop when teachers "preach" to children constantly about every little thing. Rapport also cannot develop when teachers stay in the child's space for long periods of time interfering with children's thinking. Children want to be left alone to make decisions and to grow in reasoning abilities. The secret to developing rapport is in moving out of the child's space and then into his space to quietly teach and support. Over-enunciation of words, overuse of songs, fingerplays and transition games, over-direction and bossiness kills rapport.

Identifying and Substituting Appropriate Activities and Experiences

In order to move children from inappropriate experiences to appropriate experiences, caregivers of children need to understand the differences between the two as well as possess an understanding of what constitutes appropriate early childhood experiences. Appropriate experiences for young children should be designed in relation to the ages and stages of emotional and intellectual development through which children pass. Appropriate activities should allow children to be personally involved since children need sensory-motor exploration and movement. Young children need to explore, discover, invent and create.

Hymes (1981) describes motivation as an important part of young children's educational experience. Children, for the most part, are naturally motivated and respond best when having a choice in their activities. Activities for children should lead to success so that children feel they are achievers and develop a sense of positive self-worth.

Highly structured activities are not of value. Schirrmacher (1988) explains why teacher-directed activities are usually inappropriate. (While

Schirrmacher is referring to art activities, his words about a high degree of structure and focus are easily adapted to other areas of the curriculum). Schirrmacher states:

> Highly structured, teacher-directed art activities often focus on making a finished product. Sometimes teachers display their own finished product as a standard or model, which although well-intended, frustrates young artists who cannot trace, color, cut, and or paste as well.
>
> (p. 9)

Children need well planned activities that challenge them and help them to progress physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually. Children need real objects that come from the real world so that they learn how to use the objects and see themselves as becoming contributing, responsible members of a functioning society. Age and stage appropriate activities are designed so that children can perform the tasks of the activities with a minimum of help from supervising adults. Experiences need to be open-ended so that the children can use their growing intellect to think through, question and problem solve.

It has already been established that the turtle attributes have caught the attention and imagination of children and adults everywhere. It is widely recognized that it is virtually impossible to remove such phenomena from the environment of children. In the process of examining what turtles do that captivates children, adults can find clues as to specific experiences that can be extracted from turtle media. On the following page is a chart providing examples of how to move from the selection of inappropriate Ninja Turtle activities to appropriate playroom activities. (Additional experiences are provided in Appendix C.) The chart also identifies some differences in children's reactions to both the inappropriate and appropriate experiences.

Moving From Inappropriate to Appropriate Activities

Inappropriate		Appropriate	
Ninja Turtle Activities	How Children React	Activities to Substitute	How Children React
Ninja Turtles:	Children:	Substitute:	Children:
1. live in a sewer.	1. Want to buy sewer system from toy company. Want to talk about pipes, mud, what is underground, what is yukky, hiding, etc.	1. an interest center on pipes.	1. concentrate on fitting pipes together learning about sizes, lengths, weights, and classification, plumbers, asking questions, planning, etc.
2. love to eat pizza.	2. run around talking about what Michelangelo wants on his pizza and how they (the children) want to often eat pizza.	2. making miniature pizzas.	2. socialize, take turns, follow sequence of directions, practice vocabulary, develop eye hand coordination, understand spacial relationships, color, balance, design and shape.
3. sometimes get dirty.	3. may purposely get dirty in a non-productive way.	3. supervised mud play out of doors or making clean mud.	3. learn that there are times when (wearing old clothes) it is fun and appropriate to play in mud or benefit from actions involved in activity; enjoy the earthy sensual experience of mud bringing children close to nature; release aggression in a socially acceptable way; follow sequence of steps and observe property changes of materials while making clean mud (See appendix C)

Moving From Inappropriate to Appropriate Activities

Inappropriate		Appropriate	
Ninja Turtle Activities	How Children React	Activities to Substitute	How Children React
Ninja Turtles: 4. were mutanized by ooze.	Children: 4. want to purchase expensive Ninja Turtle ooze or use impact words, or use ooze in unacceptable aggressive ways.	Substitute: 4. making slime.	Children: 4. enjoy feeling the textures of slime and find it therapeutic as they roll, punch and squeeze the substance; know that substance can be personally created instead of purchased
5. make telephone calls.	5. make telephone calls using "turtleze"; run in and out of the playhouse acting tough.	5. an interest center on telephones.	5. learn facts and concepts about telephones; learn telephone manners; take turns using telephones and engage in other learning.(See Appendix C--any interest center sheet.)
6. wear disguises.	6. dress up like turtles if possible; act out Ninja Turtle roles; refuse to answer; hide	6. props in playhouse dramatic play clothes; dramatic play plastic hats.	6. learn to assume many adult roles in society as opposed to dramatizing only Ninja Turtles.

Guidance Techniques to Use

A combination of indirect and direct guidance techniques must be used to move children from inappropriate to appropriate play experiences. Indirect techniques are the techniques that come from the management of the environment; the behind the scenes management of space, equipment, materials, and people in the center (Hildebrand, 1990:24). Direct techniques refer to the physical, verbal, and affective techniques used to influence the child's behavior (Hildebrand, 1990:42).

Indirect Techniques

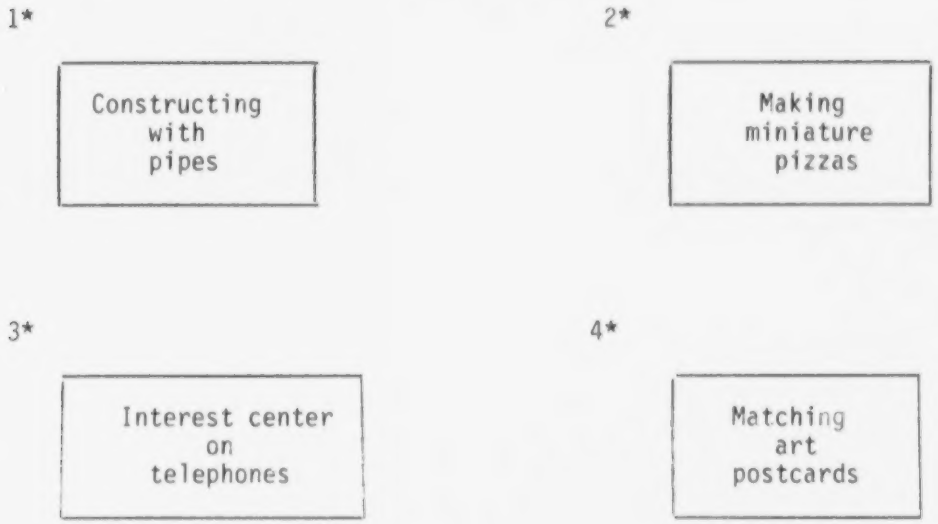
The indirect techniques that help reduce violent or aggressive play in the environment include (1) organizing space; (2) planning curriculum, (3) arranging materials so that children can use them safely; (4) storing out of sight materials you would rather the children did not use; (5) observing children; and (6) conferring with parents.

When children are bored, over stimulated, or troubled, they often resort to aggressive play. To cut down on aggressive play organize space by selecting four tables or other available areas and arranging materials in the form of temporary centers so that children can make choices. Also consider adding items to permanent centers in the playroom to get children more involved in using permanent centers.

When children have been captured by Ninja Turtles, choose ideas from the inappropriate or less desirable activities of the Ninja Turtles and plan the curriculum by extracting activities or elements and making them appropriate. A chart follows with selected experiences partially extracted from Ninja Turtle media.

Curriculum Ideas Relating to Turtles

Sample Temporary Center Arrangement
(See p. 31 for additional ideas)



*How Centers Relate to Turtles

Tables:
1. Children are fascinated that turtles live in sewers. Sewers have pipes.
2. Turtles telephone for pizza
3. Children make pizzas.
4. Children view postcards of Michelangelo's work.

Curriculum Ideas Relating to Turtles

Sample of Permanent Centers With Added Objects

(1)

Block Area

Add pictures of of skyscrapers. Talk about skyscraper building.

(2)

Dramatic Play Area

Add magazines with pictures of turtles such as Ranger Rick, music (songs about turtles), play pizzas, toy telephone.

(3)

Water Play Area

Place teaching pictures of fish and/or toy turtles in water. Let children glide objects through water.

(4)

Easel

Let children paint after viewing postcards of art work by famous artists.

(5)

Reading Center

Place books about real turtles in Reading center.

(6)

Music

Place teaching photographs about real turtles in music center. Place real pet turtle by musical instruments at music center so children can observe and dramatize actions of turtles.

(7)

Science

Have box turtle pet for children to feed, if possible. (Vet will OK)

After arranging appropriate materials in the environment some children may still resist using these materials. Arrange a conference with parents to explain that violence-related toys jeopardize children's ability to gain from play. Ask parents to monitor the amount as well as type of television the young child watches. Suggest that the parent remove toy weapons from the child's environment and focus on types of media other than those designed around Ninja Turtles. Suggest replacing Ninja Turtle activities with wholesome, non-violent toys and programs for preschoolers. (Katz, 1991:113) Remember to use positive interpersonal skills with parents to gain their trust before moving into specific suggestions as to how they should change their personal environment and the environment of their children. Provide parents with feedback concerning the child's improvement by letters or telephone calls when improvement is shown. (See Appendix B)

Direct Techniques

According to Hildebrand (1990:44) some of the direct techniques to use with children are helping, demonstrating, leading, restraining, removing, careful listening and verbal statements. In relation to redirecting children from Ninja Turtle activities to more productive activities consider the following examples:

Situation #1
The children are taking a nature walk when two of the children decide they are going to New York to find the Ninja Turtles.

Technique:
The teacher helps get the children back on track by discussing the nature walk, what the children can see, where real turtles live and the fact that he/she might set up an interest center on New York City during the children's play time.

Situation #2
The children are running about saying "pow, pow" and "cowabunga" in the playroom. After first ignoring the behavior to see if it will go away, the teacher uses the techniques of making verbal statements and leading.

Verbal Statement and Use Of Leading Technique:
The teacher suggests to the children (leading them by the hand if necessary) that the children choose one of the play areas such as the clay table in which to become involved. The teacher allows the child to choose an area or leads the child to the table where children are making clean mud. She stays with the child until the child becomes involved in the activity.
There are times when some children refuse to respond to redirection. The following is an example based on situation #2.

Situation #2 (continued)
Billy continues to hit others and say "pow, pow," after the teacher redirects. He runs about the playroom yelling "cowabunga," and "barfoni," "hose brain" and "elf lips."

Verbal Statement - Techniques Used
The teacher avoids shaming or moralizing. First the teacher concentrates

on stopping the undesirable activity. For example, the teacher might say, "You seem to be feeling angry, but I can't let you hit Tommy or call names. Let's sit over here for awhile and rest." The teacher avoids using time-out and stays with the child for awhile sitting quietly or when the child is ready, talks to the child in a different manner. The other children in the room will usually go about playing in acceptable ways as they are relieved that Billy's negative behavior is being limited. If the child fails to respond to the teacher's acknowledgement of his anger, the teacher should simply say, "Hitting hurts -- you may pound the clay instead"; or "Hitting hurts. It is simply not allowed." Remember that if the child is not responding to these techniques it is possible that rapport has not been developed between the teacher and the child. Review the section on the development of rapport.

Situation #3

Three boys are fighting using imaginary weapons. When the teacher approaches them they state that they are in fact Michelangelo, Donatello and Raphael.

Use of Careful Listening and Verbal Statement Techniques:

The teacher replies (after first trying redirection to no avail), that using weapons or "turtle play" is simply not allowed at preschool but--play is allowed. She uses a firm (not mean) voice and sits with the children until they choose another activity. When the children are in control the teacher remarks that they are "growing in their abilities to do well." The children perceive that they are improving and continue making progress. If the children say they "don't want to do well," the teacher states that she believes they soon will.

Situation #4

Justin has decided he is a Ninja Turtle and refuses to answer to any name other than "Mike." He wears shirt, mittens and other clothing with Ninja Turtle themes. He constantly "acts out" Ninja Turtle behavior.

Use of Verbal Statement Technique and Demonstration:

The teacher explains that the child is really Justin and that Ninja Turtles are pretend. The teacher shows Justin a picture of real turtles or the pet turtle and some art postcards. The teacher demonstrates how turtles walk, playing her tambourine while doing so. She/He redirects the child to the easel so that the child can pretend to be an artist or moves the child to the clay table. The teacher explains that when the child gets interested in activities perhaps they can learn about real turtles or make slime (or whatever else the teacher has planned). Later at group time the teacher reads the children a story or talks about what is real and what is pretend.

There are many verbal statements teachers may use when interacting with children that help change their way of thinking or, redirect the children's behavior. Some examples of those statements include:

1. "Ninja turtles are pretend. See how real turtles walk using four legs. Real turtles do not wear clothes.
2. It is fun to pretend but right now the pet turtle needs feeding. Help me get grapes from the refrigerator.

3. You may paint like Michelangelo; however, you are Justin.
4. Pound the clay, not Billy.
5. His name is Tommy (when the child calls another "barfoni").
6. Let me help you get started making pizzas.
7. Saying _____ is not acceptable; instead try saying _____.
8. Tell Sharon what you want. Weapons are not allowed in preschool.
9. You used your muscles--your human power--to move the box. You are very strong.
10. In real life Michelangelo was an artist. Let's look at some pictures of his work.
11. See how you blended the colors together in your painting--your artistic ability is growing.
12. When Raphael was very young he liked to scribble on paper.
13. Your name calling has stopped. Now you are becoming very responsible.
14. You three are now working as a team. How helpful."

Summary

Ninja Turtles are likeable, fun loving creatures that have captured the imagination of children since the turtles display a great deal of energy, strength and power. Because the turtles model language and engage in violence that negatively affects children, teachers need to find ways to redirect children's attention. Interesting elements of activities extracted from turtle media can be used to get children away from what is negative fantasy or "pretend" play to what is positive fantasy or "real" play. Children can be helped to focus on activities that are socially and educationally productive as opposed to activities that are damaging to their development.

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About the Speaker

Sue Miles started teaching second grade at twenty years of age in a Texas public school system. Later she began working with children under five years of age in the same district and spent a total of fourteen years with young children. Before leaving Texas, Sue did demonstration teaching for a Head Start Program in Beaumont, Texas. Her last two years of public school instruction were spent in Hinsdale, Illinois. During 1975, her first year at Waubonsee College, Sue worked with infants and two-year olds at the Waubonsee day care center. She developed a laboratory school for children from 2½ - 5 years where she did demonstration teaching for college students. Sue wrote the philosophy and designed the curriculum plan for the Children's Magnet Place that is now an integral part of the Waubonsee Child Development Center where college students observe. Sue's philosophy and teaching style came from such specialists as Elizabeth Evans and Dr. James Hymes, all advocates of the developmental approach. She also studied under Burton White at Harvard University.

As a Department Coordinator Sue Miles has repeatedly taught more than fourteen different types of classes in child development, including subjects such as teaching methods, parent education, and interpersonal effectiveness. Since the 1960's Sue has conducted approximately 1500 workshops, often serving as keynote speaker for colleges; public schools; Rotary clubs; local, state and national educational organizations; and community groups. Over the years Sue has talked to literally hundreds of children and served as a private consultant to parents. Sue also led a study group on a tour of London's British Infant schools.

Sue has been listed in Who's Who in the Midwest, Who's Who in American Women, Who's Who in World Women and various other biographical references. Sue has designed numerous child care settings and worked toward the improvement of low income day care settings as well as settings for all children. Sue has testified before the United States Congress to discuss the need for day care. She also appeared on the T.V. show Lifestyle to talk about children and stress. In 1989 she was Teacher of the Year at Waubonsee Community College. To relax Sue reads children's books and plays with her Yorkshire Terriers Benji, Jake, and Muffet.

Sue Miles has helped teachers change many a dreary setting into places where pleasant and meaningful activities take place. Labeled by workshop participants as a "witty and dynamic speaker," Sue gives practical suggestions that can be put into immediate use.

Sue is currently beginning her doctoral dissertation. You may contact her at Waubonsee Community College, Rt. 47 at Harter Rd., Sugar Grove, IL 60554. The telephone number is 708-466-4811.

Appendix A

Facts about Each Ninja Turtle

Fact Sheet #1

Hello teachers and workers! We are Ninja Turtles. When you meet us you will see why we are not appropriate for young children. Our names are:

Raphael - I Raphael am a grumbler. There is intensity to my anger. I use a sai or fighting dagger. I-Raph, am a loner and like to disguise myself a great deal. I often go out alone.

Donatello - I-Don am quiet and thoughtful. I have mechanical abilities and can fix almost anything. My mask is purple.

Michelangelo - I wear an orange mask and am armed with nunchukus, a ninja weapon consisting of two thick sticks joined by a chain. Nothing can stop me. I am powerful. I often order the pizza.

Leonardo - I wear a blue mask and carry a katana--ninja turtle fighting sword. I am cool under fire, a natural leader, careful and disciplined.

Fact Sheet #2

Donatello - His real name was Donato de Niccolo dei Bardi, and he was a Florentine sculptor. He is best known for his bronzes, "The Boy David," and his masterpiece statue Cattamelata. Donatello lived from 1386 - 1466.

Michelangelo - Michelangelo Buonarotti was a sculptor, architect, and painter. He sculpt "David," the Pieta, and Moses. He also painted scenes from the Biblical Genesis on the ceiling of the Cistine Chapel. Michelangelo lived from 1475 to 1564.

Raphael - Raphael's real name was Raffaelo Sanzio. He painted works based on mythological themes and created portraits and altar pieces. An architect as well, Raphael lived from 1483-1520.

Leonardo - Leonardo was a genius. He was a brilliant artist, scientist, engineer, and architect. His most famous paintings are the Mona Lisa and The Last Supper. Leonardo lived from 1452 - 1519.

These men lived and worked during the period of the Italian Renaissance. (Renaissance, a word for "rebirth.")

From The Unauthorized Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Quiz Book

Fact Sheet #3

What is a Ninja?

1. Two thousand years ago "ninja" men and women were like secret agents.
2. They were hired by lords to sneak into territories of rivals to spy, set fires and assassinate enemies.
3. Families of ninjas often resided in remote areas of Japan and their homes were filled with underground passages, secret doors, and trap doors.
4. Boys and girls trained for "ninjahood" at five or six years of age. They held their breath for long periods, stayed still, created camouflages and posed as different people such as carpenters, blind people or fishers.

5. They had many different spouses in different towns with different sets of children. They changed "form" into such things as monkeys, and people believed them magical.

Ninjas had skills, tricks, and used gadgets. Among the gadgets were climbing hooks, parachutes, hang gliders (large kites) and special shoes and jackets that allowed them to walk on water.

Ninjas had many weapons. Weapons included: sharp objects, sharp sticks (to throw at people), knives, ropes, smoke bombs, firecrackers, hairpins and poison. They liked to make people sleep, laugh uncontrollably or even kill them.

Their original name was shinobi.

From The Unauthorized Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Quiz Book

Fact Sheet #4

What are the martial arts?

Karate - fighting by using the "empty hand." The hand was toughened by pounding it into straw, wet sand, and tree trunks. Flying kicks were added and later farm tools were added as weapons.

Kung Fu - Kung fu means "person of highest ability." There are 1,500 different forms of Kung fu, but it is essentially boxing with an emphasis on self-defense, your attack depending on what your opponent does. Moving in a circle to avoid blows and getting behind an opponent and using the palm of the hand for attack is advised.

Jiu Jitsu - Jiu Jitsu means "gentle art," and its essence is on placing opponents in locks by immobilizing or, if necessary, dislocating or breaking their joints. (Previously, swords had been shoved into opponents!)

Taekwon-do Originating from Korea (begun centuries ago) taekwon-do means "to kick with the feet," "to punch with the hand," and "method" (do). It is similar to other forms of martial arts.

From The Unauthorized Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Quiz Book

Appendix B

Child's Letter to Parents

Dear

As you know I really like _____. These characters are only pretend. At school I do awesome things that are real like

_____

_____

I am feeling in control. Life at preschool is interesting. Today I:

built skyscrapers with blocks _____

made miniature pizzas _____

studied nighttime _____

learned about rest _____

sang a song about turtles _____

practiced or learned a fingerplay or poem about turtles _____

cared for a turtle _____

used pipes _____

used telephones _____

made clean mud _____

learned what turtles eat _____

looked at pictures by famous artists _____

examined a real turtle _____

looked at pictures of real turtles _____

engaged in _____

I forgot about the Ninja Turtles at school because I am using personal power.

Love,

Use this sheet if your set up a private agreement with children to move them from "Ninja Turtle" activities to regular activites.

Appendix C

Ideas, Activities, Interest Centers
and Recipes

Activities

Ninja Turtles: (Points of Interest)		Substitute:
1. live in a sewer	-	an interest center on pipes
2. love to eat pizza	-	Making miniature pizzas
3. sometimes get dirty	-	making clean mud
4. were mutanized by ooze	-	making slime
5. make telephone calls	-	an interest center on telephones
6. wear disguises	-	disguise props in playhouse
7. Are interesting creatures	-	put pet turtle in room (introduce through interest center approach)
8. have artists names	-	show real pieces (prints or postcards) of art work; those who are ready may print artist's names)
9. live near skyscrapers	-	study skyscrapers at block area or interest table
10. travel	-	interest center on vans, hot air balloons, or blimps
11. rest	-	interest center on rest or meditation activities for older children
12. like nighttime	-	interest centers on flashlights, stars or night
13. have tools	-	interest centers on pencils, safe scissors, brushes or gadgets
14. are strong	-	exercise on playground
15. write letters	-	interest center on mailing

Activities

Real Turtles:		Experience
1. like to swim.	-	1. Add toy turtles or other "swimming" objects to water play table
2. have unusual eyesight	-	2. Have an interest center on eyes
3. eggs hatch at the beach.	-	3. Interest center on eggs
4. walk slowly.	-	4. Rhythm exercise--imitating turtles
5. live in a shell.	-	5. Interest center on shells

Clean Mud
Type of Center (Mini or Major)

3-5
Age of Child/Children

EXPERIENCE CENTER
(based on child's/children's interest)

Focus - Topic

Source/Sources-Concepts
Source/Sources-Activities

Goal: Children will be provided with materials that lead to physical, social, emotional and intellectual development as they experience the following concepts, facts, or occurrences (See bottom of page note:)

MATERIALS	SUBJECT AREAS		
	Social Studies	Language Arts	Science
2 large plastic tubs several measuring cups 12 rolls white toilet paper lots of water a screen or cheesecloth 4 small or 3 large bar(s) of Ivory Soap 3 cups of Borax	...mud is enjoyable because it is a soft, squishy substance ...clean mud is enjoyable because of the fact that it is clean ...people like to experience mixing water with substances ...children have probably played with such substances as mud since the beginning of time ...people make money and spend money on the materials (paper, soap, etc.) to make this substance ...different manufacturers make the various products such as the paper, the plastic tubs, the soap and the Borax	Children will: ...experience oral language and new vocabulary as they make clean mud ...experience new vocabulary words might include grate, harden, cheesecloth, Borax ...improve eye-hand coordination as they unroll the paper ...follow directions as they make "clean mud" ...notice the beginning sounds if the words "clean" (cl) and "mud" (m) ...listen to stories about cleanliness at group time such as Harry the Dirty Dog ...make up chants as they make mud ...experience "figure-ground" recognition as they place objects against the background	Children will: ...begin to understand the difference between the terms or concept of wet vs. dry ...begin to understand the process of absorption ...understand how properties can be changed due to certain actions such as grating, soaking or draining ...be introduced to substances such as paper, water, soap and Borax ...be introduced to the fact that certain substances are not to be tasted such as soap or Borax ...begin to understand that substances such as paper, soap, cheesecloth and Borax have more than one use ...understand the difference between real mud and the art media
GENERAL OBJECTIVES			
The children will: ...improve coordination as they unroll paper ...enjoy unrolling paper ...notice the affect of the water on the paper ...experience oral language and new vocabulary as they discuss the experience			

Clean Mud

Math	Art	Music	Sensory Motor	Social Interactions
Children will: ...count the rolls of paper or objects on the table ...be introduced to the concept of round ...be introduced to math vocabulary such as one-to-one correspondence (one roll of paper to each child), small or large (such as size of bars of soap ...group sort the objects together ...begin to understand the concept of measurement, specifically the measurement of one cup ...begin to understand the concept of adding as in ingredients are added to the mixture	Children will: ...experience the aesthetic qualities of the center--balance, design and shape as they work with materials ...experience the texture and feel of the substance clean mud ...experience the feel of liquid (water) without soap and with soap ...observe the absence of color in the white paper	Children may/will: ...make up chants as they play with clean mud ...sing songs of their choice as they play with clean mud ...joint in chants with the teacher as they play with clean mud ...be interested in learning other songs or chants about mud, rain, or turtles as the teacher relates the activity to a science unit ...naturally tap out sounds as they place objects on the table	Children will: ...experience the feel of the materials ...smell the substance ...see the changes in the substance ...hear the natural sounds that come from the experience	Children will: ...use the materials in all stages of play from solitary to cooperative ...take turns as they engage in the experience ...learn to speak using "reasonable" voice tones ...experience stress reduction ...have an outlet for angry feelings

Selected Objectives
(Preplanned)

1.
2.
3.
(Place (b) by behavioral objectives)
Note: 1. Place (c) by concepts.
2. Place (f) by facts.
3. Place (o) by occurrences
4. Place (a) by activities.

Plan
(Used With)
1. Individual Child _____
2. Group _____
If using with one
child list name: _____

Selected Objectives
(Accomplished)
1.
2.
3.
(Place (b) by behavioral objectives)
Revisions _____
for next _____
use: _____
(continued on back of page)

Turtles

Type of Center (Mini or Major)

3 - 5

Age of Child/Children

EXPERIENCE CENTER

(based on child's/children's interest)

Focus - Topic

Source/Sources-Concepts

Source/Sources-Activities

Goal: Children will be provided with materials that lead to physical, social, emotional and intellectual development as they experience the following concepts, facts, or occurrences (See bottom of page note:)

MATERIALS	SUBJECT AREAS		
	Social Studies	Language Arts	Science
Tablecover Box turtle or model of turtle Label turtle (printed appropriately) Photograph of turtle/ turtles Book such as Now I Know Turtles Assorted Models of turtles or whatever can be located	Turtles can make very nice pets. There are many different types of turtles; 250 species. Different turtles live in different environments. Environments cannot be cold year round. Turtles have been around for millions of years. Turtles live in various parts of the world and the United States. Some turles are very large and some live to be very old. People like turtles so much that they make them into decorative objects such as pins and dishes or paint pictures of them. Turtles environments include deserts, forests, grasslands, lakes, marshes, ponds, rivers, and the sea. There are 50 species of turtles that live in North America. Many turtles live their entire life within a few miles of where they were hatched. The first turtles lived more than 185 million years ago.	Children will: use oral language as they talk about turtles. be introduced to new vocabulary such as turtle, tortoise and terrapin. listen to and discuss the turtle story. use eye-hand coordination to manipulate objects. develop an understanding of figure/ground perception as they see objects against backdrop. classify types of turtles; mud, musk, pond, snapping, soft-shelled, sea. dramatize being turtles. recognize letter t, sound of t, and label Ask questions about turtles.	Turtles are hatched from eggs. A turtle is cold blooded and needs to be kept warm to be active and digest food. Turtles have shells that are used for protection. It is the only reptile with a shell. Turtles cannot be warm and active in cold weather. Sea turtles swim rapidly. Turtles are at risk from people destroying their homes. Turtles heads are covered with scales. They have no teeth but a beak with a sharp edge to cut food. Most turtles pull their head, legs and tail into their shell that serves as armor. Some turtles are snapping turtles. Turtles eat animals and plants. (Painted and red-eared turtles sometimes carry bacteria that cause salmonella poisoning.)
GENERAL OBJECTIVES			

Math	Art	Music	Sensory Motor	Social Interactions
The children can: count turtles or objects count turtle's legs. be told about the number of species (250) be introduced to new vocabulary such as set/group/long, pounds/feet, etc. classify turtles.	The children will: experience the aesthetic qualities of the turtles color, balance, design and shape. closely observe the turtle and improve mental picture of creature. The children could: paint with brown, orange, tan, green and other colors of turtles. finger paint with blue/green colors of the sea. Children who are at the representational stage of art might paint or draw a turtle.	The children: may walk like a turtle. dramatize being a turtle by pulling into a make-believe shell chant or make up songs about turtles learn poetry about turtles learn songs or chants about turtles.	Turtles may feel cold. Turtles' shells may feel rough. Turtles are interesting to see. Turtles move very slowly but at a steady pace.	Children will: learn to take turns communicate listen/ask questions increase oral language become involved with other interested children.

Selected Objectives
(Preplanned)

1.
2.
3.
(Place (b) by behavioral objectives)
Note: 1. Place (c) by concepts.
2. Place (f) by facts.
3. Place (o) by occurrences
4. Place (a) by activities.

Plan
(Used With)
1. Individual Child _____
2. Group _____
If using with one
child list name: _____

Selected Objectives
(Accomplished)
1.
2.
3.
(Place (b) by behavioral objectives)
Revisions _____
for next _____
use: _____
(continued on back of page)

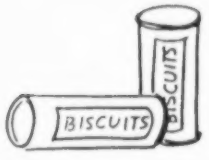
Clean Mud

12 rolls of white toilet paper
lots of water
4 small or 3 large bars of Ivory soap
3 cups of Borax

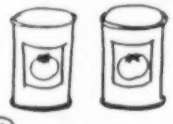
Have the children unroll the toilet paper into a large plastic tub. Add cups of water until covered with water and let set a couple of days. Grate the soap and add that along with the Borax to the soaking paper. If it is still too wet, drain over a fine screen or cheese cloth (do not squeeze). Put Clean Mud out in a large plastic tub or pan to mold, shape and have free exploration with. It should last for weeks, slowly becoming firmer and eventually hardening.

*Recipe from presentation by Phyllis Buckley and Carole D. Tadovich, 1990.

Miniature Pizzas...

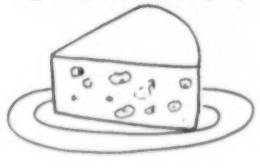
2 

refrigerator biscuits

2 small  sauce

½

Italian seasoning

1 lb. of grated 

Flour . Flatten biscuit very thin. Mix sauce and spice. Put 1

of sauce on each . Top with two

of cheese. Bake at 400° until done for 5-10 minutes.